

Title	<b>Rewriting Hagiography in High Medieval Monasteries: Towards a Quantitative Approach</b>
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Keywords	Manuscript studies, hagiography, high Middle Ages, monastic history, rewriting, Southern Low Countries, quantitative history
Summary	<p>A quantitative approach to questions of rewriting entails several practical and methodological issues. This article discusses some of these issues with a study of 1,500 hagiographical texts from the Southern Low Countries, and proposes to classify a text as rewritten if at least twenty subsequent words have been changed. This method has some important drawbacks: it systematically undervalues small and semantic rewrites, and overrates the significance of stylistic changes. Nevertheless, it does point to a number of significant trends. First of all, that texts about local and regional saints, miracles and relics were rewritten far more often than the Vitae and Passiones of universally venerated saints. Secondly, that rewriting took place mostly within the monastic walls, whereas copying occurred more often between monasteries. Thirdly, that scribes did not automatically rewrite every text they copied, but only did so in very specific circumstances. Together, these observations constitute a frame of reference for further research into the high medieval hagiography from the Southern Low Countries.</p>

## Rewriting Hagiography in High Medieval Monasteries: Towards a Quantitative Approach

In 1989, Bernard Cerquiglini published his book *Éloge de la variante*, in which he coined the sentence that would become the centrepiece of the so-called New Philology: 'l'écriture médiévale ne produit pas des variantes, elle est variance'. Medieval writing does not produce variants; it is variance.<sup>1</sup> Cerquiglini was making this strong statement on the basis of his philological research into Provençal lyric poetry. He did not concentrate on the edited poems, but studied how the poems had been written down in manuscripts – what various researchers have called 'manuscript texts', 'material texts', 'documents', 'versions' or 'variants' of the poem.<sup>2</sup> He found that these manuscript texts were all intriguingly different in poetically significant ways. In fact, the only insignificant differences he could find were simple scribal errors.<sup>3</sup> It could indeed be stated that variance characterised this discursive genre. In *Éloge de la variante*, Cerquiglini argued that it would be beneficial to apply this insight to the entirety of medieval literature.

Over the years, Cerquiglini's ideas have merged with qualitative questions of intertextuality. Researchers have noted how manuscript texts were continually being written and rewritten, they have studied how these rewrites related to one another, and have discussed the fine distinctions between 'author' and 'scribe', 'version' and 'variant'.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars have struggled with the consequences of Cerquiglini's dictum, if one takes it to its logical conclusion. John Dagenais, for example, has argued that if all manuscript texts differ from one another in significant ways, then it could not be said that a manuscript text is a 'copy' of another manuscript text. Therefore, it is

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\* Common abbreviations are BM for *Bibliothèque Municipale*, KBR for *Koninklijke Bibliotheek/Bibliothèque Royale Albert I*, and MA for *Musée des Arts anciens*.

<sup>1</sup> B. Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of this terminology see T. Snijders, 'Work, Version, and Scriptum: High Medieval Manuscript Terminology in the Aftermath of the New Philology', *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures* (forthcoming), with further references.

<sup>3</sup> E.J. Burns, *Arthurian Fictions: Rereading the Vulgate Cycle* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1985), p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Some examples taken from the field of hagiography are J. Deploige, 'Anonymat et paternité littéraire dans l'hagiographie des Pays-Bas méridionaux (ca. 920 - ca. 1320): Autour du discours sur l'"original" et la "copie" hagiographique au Moyen Âge', in *"Scribere sanctorum gesta": Recueil d'études d'hagiographie médiévale offert à Guy Philippart* (Hagiologia: Études sur la sainteté en Occident/Studies on Western Sainthood, 3), ed. by É. Renard and others (Turnhout:Brepols, 2005), pp. 77-107; J. Deploige, 'Écriture, continuation, réécriture: La réactualisation des Miracles posthumes dans l'hagiographie des Pays-Bas méridionaux, ca 920-ca 1320', in *Miracles, vies et réécritures dans l'Occident médiéval: Actes de l'atelier "la réécriture des miracles" (IHAP, Juin 2004) et SHG X-XII. Dossiers des saints de Metz et Laon et de saint Saturnin de Toulouse* (Beihefte der Francia, 65) ed. by M. Goullet and M. Heinzlmann (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2006), pp. 21-65; M. Goullet, 'Vers une typologie des réécritures hagiographiques, à partir de quelques exemples du Nord-Est de la France: Avec une édition synoptique des deux Vies de saint Èvre de Toul', in *La réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval: Transformations formelles et idéologiques* (Beihefte der Francia, 58), ed. by M. Goullet and M. Heinzlmann (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2003), pp. 109-144.

meaningless to say that one work (such as the *Roman de la Rose*) has been written down in various manuscripts, for in fact, there are as many different *Romans de la Rose* as there are manuscripts.<sup>5</sup> He argued that every manuscript text (which he called 'scriptum', pl. 'scripta') is wholly unique.

A full exploration of these conceptual issues would need to combine qualitative discussions and case studies with a quantitative approach, because a quantitative investigation of large numbers of scripta (a term I will employ in lieu of the cumbersome 'manuscript texts')<sup>6</sup> could enhance our understanding of the structural way in which contextual factors influenced the process of rewriting. In order to embark on a quantitative study, we would need to classify every scriptum according to two criteria: 1) the amount of variant readings in the text, and 2) the contextual elements that might influence the amount of variance readings, such as the text's discursive genre, its language, its length, its place of origin, and the kind of manuscript it was included in (a legendary, a lectionary, a miscellany, etc.) If contextual elements can be shown to have a significant correlation with the amount of variant readings in a text, we could gain a clearer understanding of the relations between textual genre and rewriting (was a literary scriptum rewritten in the same way as saints' lives, sermons, or chronicles - or were there genre-related variations in the mechanics of the rewriting process?), between manuscript genre and rewriting (were scripta in *miscellanea* more or less likely to be rewritten than scripta in more rigidly structured codices?), between language and rewriting (were Latin scripta generally treated differently than vernacular works?), and between particular environments and rewriting (did some *scriptoria* or milieus rewrite more eagerly than others?).

Of course, a coding system such as this would be plagued with endless problems of classification. Scripta are notoriously hard to conceptualise. They tend not to conform to the ideal-typical definition of a certain genre, their manuscript context can be hard to determine and their place of origin hard to pinpoint. Even more importantly, it is a challenge in and of itself to put a number on the variant readings within a scriptum, as we shall see. In short, a quantitative study has to classify something that defies classification. This inevitably leads to generalisations, so that the outcomes of large-scale quantitative studies are inevitably superficial when compared to in-depth case studies. Nevertheless, a large-scale analysis of hundreds of scripta could still contribute to our understanding of the mechanics of rewriting in the high medieval period, even if the results can be no more than an inroad for further, qualitative studies.

A large-scale investigation of manuscripts also has to contend with practical issues. Most importantly, a sufficiently ambitious project could not hope to investigate the smallest scribal errors

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<sup>5</sup> J. Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in a Manuscript Culture: Glossing the Libro de Buen Amor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this term see Snijders, 'Work, Version, Text and Scriptum'.

in every scriptum, as this would take up too much time and resources – but neither could it rely solely on library catalogues, as they tend not to yield enough detail for meaningful results.

This article discusses an approach to survey a corpus of circa 1,500 scripta from the high Middle Ages. My primary aim will be to sketch out a way to examine the amount of ‘variance’ between these scripta and translate that into a number. The first part of this article outlines a methodology to do so, and discusses some of its inherent problems. The second part will apply the proposed methodology to the corpus of scripta to see what it can do, and in what respects it falls short.

I will concentrate on a corpus of Latin hagiographical scripta that were written for the benefit of male Benedictine monasteries from the tenth to the twelfth century. Geographically, the scope of this survey is limited to manuscripts produced in the ancient bishoprics of Thérouanne, Tournai, Arras/Cambrai and Liège, the rough equivalent of modern-day Belgium and Northern France.<sup>7</sup> During the high Middle Ages, this region could boast several important abbeys with large scriptoria and important libraries, such as St.-Amand, St.-Bertin, St.-Vaast, Lobbes, St.-Trond and Stavelot-Malmedy. They were very interested in the life and deeds of the saints, and more than 3,000 saints’ lives, passions, miracles and similar scripta have been preserved in their high medieval manuscripts.<sup>8</sup>

From a qualitative point of view, the rewriting of these scripta has been well studied.<sup>9</sup> ‘Rewriting’ is generally understood as consciously drafting a new version of an existing scriptum, either by applying formal changes regarding the signifier, or by applying semantic changes regarding the signified.<sup>10</sup> The focus of most research has been on the reasons to rewrite an existing scriptum, which could be manifold. Scribes frequently claimed that they were rewriting an old scriptum for purely stylistic reasons. This may sometimes have been true, but it was often a deliberate attempt to draw attention away from hidden and far more delicate reasons to change the existing scriptum.<sup>11</sup> There could, for example, have been a spiritual and/or political need to actualise the memory of a saint for

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<sup>7</sup> I define ‘hagiographic’ here as all scripta that are primarily concerned with the deeds of a saint, both before and after his or her death. For a discussion of the best definition, see G. Philippart, ‘Hagiographes et hagiographie, hagiologes et hagiologie: Des mots et des concepts’, *Hagiographica* 1 (1994), pp. 1-16; F. Lifschitz, ‘Beyond Positivism and Genre: “Hagiographical” Texts as Historical Narrative’, *Viator* 25 (1994), pp. 95-113; M. Van Uytanghe, ‘L’hagiographie: Un “genre” chrétien ou antique tardif?’, *Analecta Bollandiana* 111 (1993), pp. 135-188.

<sup>8</sup> J. Deploige, ‘Hagiografische strategieën en tactieken tegen de achtergrond van kerkelijke en maatschappelijke vernieuwingstendensen: De Zuidelijke Nederlanden, ca 920 - ca 1320’ 3 vols. (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Ghent, 2001-2002), pp. 165-178.

<sup>9</sup> M. Goullet, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques: Essai sur les réécritures de vies de saints dans l’occident latin médiéval (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> s.)* (Hagiologia - Études sur la sainteté en Occident/Studies on Western Sainthood, 4) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005) and the various articles in *La réécriture hagiographique* and *Miracles, vies et réécritures* ed. by Goullet and Heinzelmänn (see note 4 above).

<sup>10</sup> Goullet and Heinzelmänn, ‘Avant-propos’, pp. 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> M. Goullet and G. Philippart, ‘Le Miracle médiéval: Bilan d’un colloque’, in *Miracles, vies et réécritures*, p. 9.

a specific audience, or in a particular historical context.<sup>12</sup> Mixtures of these and other reasons were quite common.

Monique Goullet has distinguished three common forms of high medieval hagiographical rewrites.<sup>13</sup> Most frequent were *formal quantitative* rewrites that changed the length of a scriptum without significantly altering its meaning. The scriptum could be lengthened (by inserting or extending paragraphs), or abridged (by summarising, shortening or deleting paragraphs).<sup>14</sup> In the period under discussion, scripta were usually lengthened rather than abridged.<sup>15</sup> A second kind of rewrite was *formal, non-quantitative*. In these cases, the style of the scriptum would be changed without significantly altering its length or meaning. It could be translated into another language, be changed from prose to poetry or vice versa, the metre of a poem could be adjusted, more eloquent prose could be used, etc.<sup>16</sup> Last but not least, a scriptum could be rewritten at a *semantic* or conceptual level. This implied changing the meaning of a scriptum through all kinds of adaptations, such as altering the deeds of the saint or changing his or her motivations for certain actions. The message of the scriptum could be modified by turning a confessor into a martyr or by pulling a secondary character to the foreground, by changing the saint's place of death or the monastery where his or her relics were buried, etc.<sup>17</sup> It goes without saying that this tripartite classification of rewriting only represents ideal types. Real life rewrites usually combined elements from multiple modes.

## 1 Methodological outlines

The first step towards a quantitative survey of hagiographical rewrites must be a definition of what we will be studying. In usual definitions of 'rewriting', a distinction is made between 'rewriting' (in the definition given above) and 'continuing' a text. Typical examples of 'rewriting' can often be found in saints' lives (*Vitae*) and passions (*Passiones*). These texts had a straightforward basic structure. A

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<sup>12</sup> B. De Gaiffier, *Études critiques d'hagiographie et d'iconologie* (Subsidia hagiographica, 43) (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1967), pp. 444-447 ; F. De Vriendt, 'Le dossier hagiographique de sainte Waudru, abbesse de Mons (IX<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)', *Mémoires et publications de la société des sciences, des arts et des lettres du Hainaut* 98 (1996), pp. 1-37; the articles by F. Dolbeau, A.-M. Helvétius and P. Henriot in *La réécriture hagiographique*; and the articles by A.-V. Gilles-Raynal and K. Herbers in *Miracles, vies et réécritures*, etc.

<sup>13</sup> The most comprehensive discussion of the following typology can be found in Goullet, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques*; which is based on the work of Gérard Genette.

<sup>14</sup> Goullet, 'Vers une typologie', pp. 110-111; Goullet, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques*, p. 75; J.-C. Poulin, 'Les réécritures dans l'hagiographie bretonne (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles)', in *La réécriture hagiographique*, p. 157; A.G. Rigg, 'The Long or the Short of it? Amplification or Abbreviation?', *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 10 (2000), pp. 46-52; Gaiffier, *Études critiques*, p. 448.

<sup>15</sup> Goullet and Philippart, 'Le miracle médiéval', pp. 9-10.

<sup>16</sup> Goullet, 'Vers une typologie', pp. 111-112; Hugh Magennis, "'Listen Now All and Understand": Adaptation of Hagiographical Material for Vernacular Audiences in the Old English lives of St. Margaret', *Speculum* 71:1 (1996), pp. 27-42; E.B. Vitz, 'Vie, légende, littérature: Traditions orales et écrites dans les histoires de saints', *Poétique* 72 (1987), p. 400.

<sup>17</sup> Goullet, 'Vers une typologie', pp. 112-113.

Vita would start at the birth of the saint, dwell extensively on his or her virtues and end with the saint's death, whereas a Passion would concentrate on the saint's determined endurance of various tortures.<sup>18</sup> Such narratives were relatively timeless and spiritually somewhat clichéd, so that it was easy to rewrite them into a more pleasing style, or change their precise contents to reflect a contemporary concern. A typical example of a 'continuation' can be found in many miracle collections. Miracles were (usually short) stories that testified to very specific incidents – archetypal miracles would recount how a saint rescued a child from drowning, brought a wayward monk to justice, or punished a local lord for his criminal activities. Because they referred to identifiable people and circumstances, they were much harder to rewrite. As a result, collections of miracles were usually updated by adding a new and more relevant story to the compilation, or by deleting an offending miracle.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, Miracle collections can be classified as a genre that was often *continued*, but almost never *rewritten* in the narrow sense of the word.<sup>20</sup>

From a literary point of view, continuations and rewrites are very different techniques. A rewrite actually transforms a scriptum, whereas the continuation of a scriptum just adds a new fragment of text to the existing story.<sup>21</sup> However, from a historical point of view, both procedures are ways to consciously adapt an existing scriptum to fit a new situation. I would argue that even the reordering of the individual miracles in a collection, without making the smallest change to their wording, was a way of adapting the meaning of the collection as a whole. Therefore, I will include rewritten, continued and reordered scripta in this survey of the amount of 'variance' in high medieval hagiography.

### 1.1 Terminology: dossier, work, and scriptum

Latin hagiographical scripta have been catalogued quite thoroughly. Following in the footsteps of Jean Bolland (1596-1665), the group of hagiologists that calls itself the Bollandists has been indexing hagiographical works since the seventeenth century. This has resulted in an unparalleled amount of

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<sup>18</sup> R. Boyer, 'An Attempt to Define the Typology of Medieval Hagiography', in *Hagiography and Medieval Literature: A Symposium* ed. by H. Bekker-Nielsen and others (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), pp. 27-36; A.-M. Helvétius, 'Les modèles de sainteté dans les monastères de l'espace belge du VIII<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Revue bénédictine*, 103 (special issue 'Le monachisme à Byzance et en Occident du VIII<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> siècle') (1993), pp. 51-67.

<sup>19</sup> Goullet, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>20</sup> Deploige, 'Écriture, continuation, réécriture', p. 41 ; Th. Mertens, 'Niet-literaire literatuur', in: *Een school spierinkjes: Kleine opstellen over middelnederlandse artes-literatuur* (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen, 26) ed. by W.P. Gerritsen, A. van Gijzen and O.S.H. Lie (Hilversum: Verloren, 1991), pp. 120-122.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, pp. 40-44.

systematising work, published as a combination of paper and online catalogues called the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, usually abbreviated as *BHL*.<sup>22</sup>

In their catalogues, the Bollandists proceed from a strict distinction between three different phenomena. First of all, the **dossier** of a saint is an umbrella term that encompasses every hagiographical text that has ever been written about that particular saint. If a particular group of saints always appears together in the hagiographical sources (such as Simon and Judas, or Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus) the dossier encompasses all texts about this group of saints. Secondly, the Bollandists distinguish the various **works** about such a (group of) saints. They for example discern eight different works that have been written about Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus, which they define by their incipits and desinits. They first list a *Vita falso adscripta Goldschero mon.* The prologue of this work starts with the words 'Quamvis beata vita sanctorum apud omnipotentem Deum...'. The body of the work starts with 'Igitur postquam bb. Petrus...' and ends with '...non longe a reliquiis ss. Eucharii et Valerii honorabilius posuerunt [die XVIII kal. Oct.]'. Finally, the epilogue starts with 'Haec de gestis ss. patrum...' and ends with '...et his potiora se percepisse laetatur, praestante... Amen.' Normally speaking, every scriptum that contains these particular phrases can thus be classified as a witness of the *Vita falso adscripta Goldschero mon.* The next work that the Bollandists list is an *Additamentum* that starts with the words 'Sanctorum, ff. dd., Trevirorum episcoporum...' and ends with '...custodian.' The third work, another *Additamentum*, starts with 'Nos quoque, o civitas Trev.' and ends with '...saeculorum. Amen.' Then they list yet another *Additamentum*, a *Vita auct. Harigero ab. Lobiensi*, a *Vita auct. Aegidio Aureaevallensi*, an anonymous *Vita*, and a *Sermo*.<sup>23</sup> In order to facilitate the discussion about these works, the Bollandists have numbered all of these works. The *Vita falso adscripta Goldschero mon.* was numbered 2655, the *Additamentum* that starts with 'Sanctorum...' was numbered 2656, the *Additamentum* that starts with 'Nos quoque...' was numbered 2657, etc. These numbers are usually referred to as a work's 'BHL number'.

Thirdly and lastly, the Bollandists list the extant **scripta** that can be said to 'contain', 'express', or 'perform' these works. According to the Bollandists, 77 scripta have been preserved that contain one of the works about Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus. These scripta have been scattered all over the

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<sup>22</sup> *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis* (Subsidia hagiographica, 6) (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898-1901); H. Fros, *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis: Novum supplementum* (Subsidia hagiographica, 70) (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1986); *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina manuscripta* (<http://bhlms.fltr.ucl.ac.be/>), last updated on 9 Dec 1998.

<sup>23</sup> The Bollandists usually consider significant rewrites as new works, especially when the *incipit* or *explicit* was changed or if the rewrite was formal non-quantitative in nature. However, it should be noted that the divisions between works are somewhat arbitrary: there are quite a number of cases where important rewrites have been overlooked, whereas practically unchanged scripta were designated as works in their own rights. See M. Trigalet, 'L'édition médiévale de l'hagiographie latine' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres: Département d'histoire FUNDP, Namur, 2006-2007), pp. 104-106.

world, from Admont to Zwettl. This article, however, focuses solely on the high medieval bishoprics of Tournai, Thérouanne, Arras/Cambrai and Liège. From this area, seven manuscripts about Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus have been preserved (see table 1). Of these seven, three contain the *Vita falso adscripta Goldschero mon.* (BHL 2655) and four others contain both this Vita and the first *Additamentum* (BHL 2655 + BHL 2656).<sup>24</sup>

Table 1: The extant manuscripts of saints Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus

Dossier	EUCHARIUS, VALERIUS EN MATERNUS	
Work	BHL 2655 (Vita)	BHL 2655 (Vita) & BHL 2656 (Additamentum)
Scripta	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Douai BM 838</li> <li>2. Brussels KBR 9289</li> <li>3. Namur MA 15</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brussels KBR II 976</li> <li>2. Douai BM 842</li> <li>3. Douai BM 865</li> <li>4. Valenciennes BM 514</li> </ol>

## 1.2 Counting words

How can the differences between these seven scripta be surveyed in a quantitative way? A first option comes down to counting the instances in which the scripta differ from one another. Assuming that none of the scripta have been digitalised and coded in XML or a similar language, the easiest (though certainly not the best) way to accomplish this is to take an edited text or a ‘best text’ and compare it to the text in the various scripta by counting words. Say that an edited text of 1,000 words is compared to scriptum A and scriptum B. From scriptum A, 990 words are identical to the edition (so that the variance between the edition and scriptum A can be expressed as 1 percent). From scriptum B, only 600 words are identical to the edition (a 40 percent variance between the edition and scriptum B). This indicates a significant variance of approximately 40 percent between scripta A and B.

However, the word counting method had three very obvious drawbacks. First of all, it is not an adequate way to measure semantic rewrites.<sup>25</sup> For example, if a ten-word change in scripta A alters the place where the saint’s relics were buried, it would be a very important rewrite, even though it is of minor importance from a quantitative point of view. Similarly, counting variant readings between scripta is unsuitable for rewrites that changed the style, form or language of a scriptum without altering its length of contents (formal non-quantitative rewrites). Because a translation from one language to another, or the conversion from prose to poetry essentially changes every single word in

<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that only scripta within a single codicological unit have been included in this study.

<sup>25</sup> For a methodology to quantitatively analyse narrative scripta with a stronger focus on semantics through a methodology closely related to content analysis, see R. Franzosi, *Quantitative Narrative Analysis* (Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, 162) (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2010).



the scriptum, this would amount to a 100 percent rewrite. Such a percentage arguably obscures the fact that the scriptum's meaning might not be changed at all.

Secondly, the word counting method does not immediately show the relation between scriptum A and scriptum B. The 1 percent change in scriptum A may be different from the changes in scriptum B, so that the two scripta vary from one another by 41 percent. On the other hand, the changes in A may be present in B as well, so the two scripta vary from one another by only 39 percent. It will always be necessary to conduct more detailed, qualitative studies to map out the exact relations between the various scripta.

However, the most serious problem with the word counting method is the issue of intentionality. As we have defined rewriting as the *conscious* adaptation of a scriptum, we should attempt to discriminate between cases where the scribe strived for a 'Xerox copy' of an existing scriptum but made some inadvertent errors, and cases where the scribe consciously implemented changes. The counting method cannot do this. Table 2, for example, compares the first two chapters of the *Vita falso adscripta Goldschero mon.* (BHL 2655) in three manuscripts: Brussels KBR 9289, Namur MA 15, and Douai BM 838. The variant readings between the fragments have been underlined.

Table 2: Comparing the 'Vita falso adscripta Goldschero mon.' (BHL 2655) in three manuscripts

Brussels KBR 9289 (ca. 1125) 117 words	Namur MA 15 (ca. 1125-1144) 117 words	Douai BM 838 (ca. 1175-1300) 197 words
[chapter 1] x	[chapter 1] X	[chapter 1] <u>Qvamuīs apud omnipotentem</u> <u>Deum sanctorum memoria</u> <u>æternaliter maneat, &amp; eorum</u> <u>nomina liber vitæ sine obliuione</u> <u>contineat; nichil tamen veræ</u> <u>religioni obsistere credimus, si</u> <u>eorum merita sæpius mente</u> <u>reuoluamus, actusque illorum</u> <u>verbis &amp; scriptis commemoremus.</u> <u>Vnde &amp; ea quæ de gestis</u> <u>sanctorum Patrum Treuericæ vrbis</u> <u>certissima maiorum relatione</u> <u>agnouimus, silentio segniter</u> <u>præterire non debemus: quia</u> <u>iustum est hos piis commendare</u> <u>memoriis, quorum cotidie</u> <u>instruimur exemplis &amp; documentis.</u>
[chapter 2] Igitur postquam beatissimus <u>Petrus Apostolus Antiochenam</u> Ecclesiam prima confessione Christiani nominis super solidissimam petram fundauerat; & Pontum, Galathiam, <u>Capadociam, Asiam, ac Bithiniam</u>	[chapter 2] Igitur postquam beatissimus <u>Petrus Apostolus Antiochenam</u> Ecclesiam prima confessione Christiani nominis super solidissimam petram fundauerat; & Pontum, Galathiam, <u>Cappadociam, Asiam, ac Bythiniam</u>	[chapter 2] Igitur postquam beatissimus <u>Petrus Antiochenam</u> Ecclesiam prima confessione Christiani nominis super solidissimam petram fundauerat; & Pontum, Galathiam, <u>Cappadociam, ac Bithiniam</u>

verbo prædicationis illustrauerat;	verbo prædicationis illustrauerat;	verbo prædicationis illustrauerat;
in exordio regni Claudij Cæsaris, superna prouisione ordinante, Romam ingressus, salutarem cunctis credentibus fidem constantissima assertione prædicauit, <u>eandemque</u> potentissimis signis atque virtutibus comprobauit; & eiusdem Urbis Pontificatum viginti quinque annis strenuissime rexit.	in exordio regni Claudij Cæsaris, superna prouisione ordinante, Romam ingressus, salutarem cunctis credentibus fidem constantissima assertione prædicauit, <u>eandemque</u> potentissimis signis atque virtutibus comprobauit; & eiusdem Urbis Pontificatum viginti quinque annis strenuissime rexit.	in exordio regni Claudij Cæsaris, superna prouisione ordinante, Romam ingressus, salutarem cunctis credentibus fidem constantissima assertione prædicauit, <u>eandemque</u> potentissimis signis atque virtutibus comprobauit; & eiusdem Urbis Pontificatum viginti quinque annis strenuissime rexit.
Vbi dum <u>firmiter veræ fidei</u> fundamenta collocasset, & per totam Italiam fama doctrines eius longe lateque percrebuisset; tandem a Spiritu sancto præmonitus, Galliæ quoque ac Germaniæ verbum salutis inferre ordinauit:	Vbi dum <u>firmiter veræ fidei</u> fundamenta collocasset, & per totam Italiam fama doctrines eius longe lateque percrebuisset; tandem a Spiritu sancto præmonitus, Galliæ quoque ac Germaniæ verbum salutis inferre ordinauit:	Vbi dum <u>firmiter fidei</u> fundamenta collocasset, & per totam Italiam fama doctrines eius longe lateque percrebuisset; tandem a Spiritu sancto præmonitus, Galliæ quoque ac Germaniæ verbum salutis inferre ordinauit:
atque ad hoc opus tres probatissimos viros ex suis discipulis elegit, Eucharium <u>videlicet, Valerium &amp; Maternum:</u> quorum <u>Eucharium statim</u> <u>Episcopali dignitate</u> sublimauit, Valerium ad gradum <u>Diaconatus</u> <u>promouit</u> , Maternum Subdiaconum consecrauit.	atque ad hoc opus tres probatissimos viros ex suis discipulis elegit, Eucharium <u>scilicet, Valerium &amp; Maternum:</u> quorum <u>Eucharium statim ad</u> <u>Episcopalem dignitate</u> sublimauit, Valerium ad gradum <u>Diaconatus</u> , Maternum Subdiaconum consecrauit.	atque ad hoc opus tres probatissimos viros ex suis discipulis elegit, Eucharium <u>videlicet, qui interpretatur gratia, magnarum vir existens virtutum,</u> <u>&amp; implevit opere quod</u> <u>designabatur in nomine &amp;</u> <u>Valerium atque Maternum:</u> quorum <u>statim Eucharium ad</u> <u>Episcopalem dignitatem</u> sublimauit, Valerium ad gradum <u>Diaconatus</u> <u>promouit</u> , Maternum Subdiaconum consecrauit.

Taking the 117-word Brussels fragment as the point of reference, there is a difference of five words between the Brussels and the Namur scripta (4.3 percent), a difference of 91 words between the Brussels and the Douai scripta (77.8 percent), and a difference of 92 words between the Namur and the Douai scripta (78.6 percent). However, some of these changes may have been quite accidental, such as the omission of the words ‘apostolus’, ‘veræ’ and ‘promovit’ in the Douai manuscript. It could be argued that these words should not be counted as instances of rewriting, yet it would be infeasible to qualitatively appraise every single variant reading in hundreds of manuscripts to distinguish between intentional and accidental changes. In the end, therefore, the word counting method is not a suitable way to study variance between scripta.

### 1.3 Counting word chains

One way of avoiding this problem is to adapt the counting methodology by defining ‘variant reading’ more broadly. Instead of concentrating on differences between single words, I would propose to focus on chains of words. In the remainder of this article, I will test the merits of counting chains of at least twenty consecutive words.

The obvious disadvantage to counting ‘word chains’ is the element of arbitrariness – why 20 words and not 25 or 30? – as well as its disregard for meaningful small changes. The major advantage of focusing on such chains is that it decreases the problem of intentionality, as chains of twenty words or more were not often changed by accident. It is true that a scribe might occasionally forget to copy a lengthy sentence, but this is far less frequent than the omission of single words. For example, the exclusion of the 66-word introduction in the Brussels and Namur scripta was unlikely to have been simple oversight, whereas some of the other changes just might be. The second advantage to counting ‘word chains’ is that it takes very little time. A quick comparison of the scripta about saint Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus reveals that all scripta contain BHL 2655 without chapter 15.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, four manuscripts contain BHL 2655 as well as BHL 2656. Finally, two manuscripts contain a strongly abbreviated version of the *Vita* (the first chapter was deleted and chapters 4, 7, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23 and 25 were shortened).<sup>27</sup> There are thus three ‘families’ of scripta that each tells a significantly different story about this group of saints (table 3).<sup>28</sup> This method of distinguishing families aims to estimate the amount of variance within a dossier, instead of trying to determine the exact amount of variance between scripta.

Table 3: the dossier of Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus

Dossier	EUCHARIUS, VALERIUS AND MATERNUS		
Work	BHL 2655		BHL 2655 + BHL 2656
Family	Without chapters 1 & 15, shortened chapters 4, 7, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23 & 25.	Without chapter 15.	BHL 2655 without chapter 15, BHL 2656 complete.

<sup>26</sup> Chapter numbers are taken from 'Eucharius et Valerius Treverenses epp. et Maternus Coloniensis ep.: Vita falso adscripta Goldschero mon.' *Acta Sanctorum* Jan. 2 (Antwerp: Société des Bollandistes, 1643), pp. 918-22.

<sup>27</sup> Removed fragments are: 'Non possumus...illis manifestetur' from chapter 4, 'Vene autem...pro nobis' from chapter 7, 'Erat namque doctrina...audire cupiebant' from chapter 18, 'Quantum vero...sublimitate contemplationis' from chapter 19, 'pet praedictum...visceribus incitaret' from chapter 21, 'quique inter cetera...solamine occurit' from chapter 22, 'his ergo...sacerdotali ministerio' from chapter 23 and 'Haec de gestis...non cessat agere' from chapter 25. As both scripta removed exactly the same fragments, they must be closely related. This is also apparent from their titles. Both scripta only name Saint Eucharius in the title, whereas the titles in the other manuscripts name Eucharius as well as Valerius and Maternus. The close connection between the two scripta is not surprising, as these manuscripts were produced in the monasteries of St.-Laurent and St.-Hubert, which maintained close relations at the beginning of the twelfth century.

<sup>28</sup> In this survey, I proceed from the definition that it takes at least one changed word chain to classify two scripta as two different ‘families’.

<b>Scripta</b>	1. <i>Brussels KBR 9289</i> 2. <i>Namur MA 15</i>	1. <i>Douai BM 838</i>	1. <i>Brussels KBR II 976</i> 2. <i>Douai BM 842</i> 3. <i>Douai BM 865</i> 4. <i>Valenciennes BM 514</i>
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In order to compare the dossier of Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus to other dossiers, the level of variance within the dossier needs to be expressed as a number. As we are interested in the amount of rewriting within a dossier, we need to express the seven preserved scripta as a factor of the three different 'families' in the dossier. This can be done with the simple formula:

$$\text{Percentage of rewriting within a dossier} = (100/(\text{number of scripta} - 1)) * (\text{number of 'families'} - 1)).^{29}$$

In our example,  $(100/(7-1)) * (3-1) = 29$  percent. In other words, the dossier of Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus has been subject to a 29 percent rewrite between the tenth and the twelfth centuries in the studied region. As other dossiers are quantified in a similar way, it becomes easy to spot which dossiers were heavily rewritten and which seem to be very homogeneous. It thus gives the researcher a clear idea of which dossiers might be worth a qualitative study.

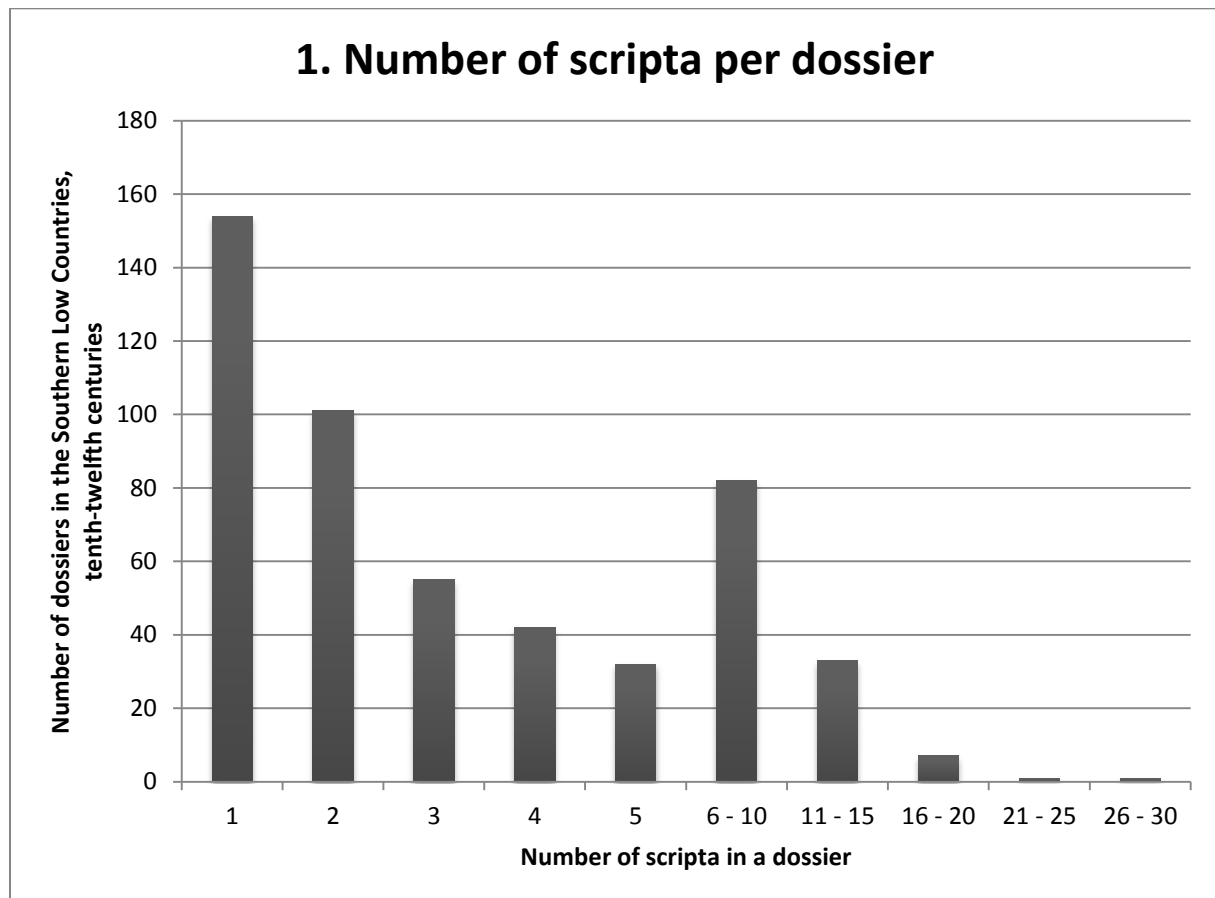
A drawback to this methodology is that it only starts to yield meaningful results if a dossier consists of a significant number of scripta. The dossier of Bishop Adalbertus of Prague, for example, consists of only one scriptum from the studied region. It is clearly impossible to study the level of rewriting in a dossier that consists of only one scriptum. Expressed as a number, a one-scriptum dossier would always be rewritten 0 percent  $(100/[1-1] * [1-1])$ .<sup>30</sup> If somewhere in the future a new scriptum would be discovered that is significantly different from the first, the dossier would come to consist of two families that each consist of one scriptum, so the dossier would suddenly be 100 percent rewritten  $(100/[2-1] * [2-1])$ . In short, such small numbers of scripta cannot be converted to percentages in a meaningful way. The larger the dossier, the more meaningful a quantitative

<sup>29</sup> The importance of subtracting one manuscript and one story becomes clear in a dossier of  $n$  scripta from the same family. This should be expressed as  $100/(n-1) * (1-1) = 0$  percent rewriting, and never as  $(100/n) * 1 = 100/n$  percent rewriting. To give a more tangible example, the dossier of Longinus consists of six scripta from the same family. According to our definition, the dossier has not been rewritten. Using the above formula, this could be expressed as  $(100/(6-1)) * (1-1) = 0$  percent rewriting, whereas not subtracting one manuscript and one story would result in the obviously wrong number of  $(100/6) * 1 = 16.7$  percent rewriting. (Longinus miles m. in Cappadocia, BHL 4965, can be found in Brussels KBR 9290 ff. 190v-181v, Cambrai BM 863 ff. 188r-189r, Douai BM 221 ff. 124r-126r, Douai BM 840 ff. 128v-129v, Douai BM 865 ff. 78r-80r, Namur Seminary 37 ff. 126v-128r.)

<sup>30</sup> Adalbertus ep. Pragensis, BHL 37, Ms. Brussels KBR 9290 ff. 90v-96r. It should be noted that this methodology focuses on rewriting within a dossier, without counting the changes later readers can make within a scripta (in which case even one preserved scripta could be a rewrite of itself).

approach will be. For this reason, this remainder of this article will focus on the 192 dossiers from the high medieval Southern Low Countries that consist of four or more scripta.<sup>31</sup>

*Graph 1: the number of scripta in hagiographical dossiers from the Southern Low Countries, 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries*



#### 1.4 Working with minimum and maximum percentages

In the results presented below, the level of rewriting in a dossier is always expressed in two percentages (such as ‘St Juliana’s dossier has been rewritten within a range of 29 to 43 percent’). These percentages reflect two possibilities. The first is the **minimum level of rewriting**, expressing that the dossier has been rewritten at least 29 percent. The second is the **maximum level of rewriting**, expressing that the dossier was rewritten for not more than 43 percent.

The two percentages result from the impossibility to manually examine all 1544 scripta in the 192 dossiers. Some part of the analysis was thus based on the information in library catalogues. Because not all catalogues are equally detailed and dependable, this introduces some uncertainty to

<sup>31</sup> One reason to draw a line at four scripta, is that this represents the minimum number of scripta that allow for network analysis according to the latest philological theories. For the mathematical/philological reasoning behind this number, see B. Salemans, ‘Building Stemmas with the Computer in a Cladistic, Neo-Lachmannian, Way: The Case of Fourteen Text Versions of Lanceloet van Denemerken’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2000), pp. 57-58.

the results. Take the dossier of St Juliana as an example. It consists of two works (BHL 4522 and BHL 4523). Six scripta from the Southern Low Countries contain BHL 4523, and I have manually checked them against an edition. One of the scripta has a change in chapter seven, and the five others have changes in both chapters seven and fifteen. According to the library catalogues, there are two further scripta that contain BHL 4522. In sum, there seem to be eight scripta about St Juliana, which can be subdivided into three families (table 4). The dossier of St Juliana thus seems to have been rewritten 29 percent  $[(100/(8-1))*(3-1)]$ .

Table 4: the dossier of Juliana (minimum level of rewriting)

Dossier	JULIANA V.M. NICOMEDIAE		
Works	BHL 4522	BHL 4523	
Families	(not checked personally)	changed chapter 7	changed chapter 7 changed chapter 15
Scripta	1. Brussels KBR II 932 2. Douai BM 840	1. Brussels KBR II 975	1. Arras BM 569 2. Brussels KBR 9810-14 3. Brussels KBR II 1181 4. Brussels BB 506 5. Valenciennes BM 510

However, there is a slight uncertainty in this result, as the identification of Brussels KBR II 932 and Douai BM 840 as largely identical copies of BHL 4522 was based on information from library catalogues. As both the Brussels and the Douai catalogues are very concise and over a century old, their information might be faulty. It might be that one or both of these scripta contain significant changes that have been overlooked in the catalogue. In an imaginary ‘worst-case scenario’, the dossier of Juliana actually consists of *four* families instead of three, which would translate into a rewriting percentage of 43 percent (table 5).

Table 5: the dossier of Juliana (maximum level of rewriting)

Dossier	JULIANA V.M. NICOMEDIAE			
Works	unknown	unknown	BHL 4523	
Families	?	?	changed chapter 7	changed chapter 7 changed chapter 15
Scripta	1. Brussels KBR II 932	1. Douai BM 840	1. Brussels KBR II 975	1. Arras BM 569 2. Brussels KBR 9810-14 3. Brussels KBR II 1181 4. Brussels BB 506 5. Valenciennes BM 510

As a result, the quantifications in the remainder of this article express the *minimum* and the *maximum* level of rewriting in a dossier. The phrase ‘St Juliana’s dossier has been rewritten within a range of 29 to 43 percent’ thus means that between 29 percent and 43 percent of the scripta about

St Juliana show significant textual variations with respect to one another. In practice, this means that if a scribe from the studied region would sit down to write a new scriptum about St Juliana, there would be a 29 to 43 percent chance that he would produce a scriptum that belongs to a new family (and, conversely, there would be a 57 to 71 percent chance that he would simply copy a scriptum from an existing family without rewriting it to a significant extent).

These percentages are primarily meaningful in a comparative context. The dossier of St Mennas, for example, has been rewritten 0 percent (1 family in 4 scripta). St Agnes' dossier has been rewritten within a range of 17 to 33 percent (3 to 5 families in 13 scripta). The dossier of St Nicolas has been rewritten within a range of 93 to 100 percent (15 to 16 families in 16 scripta). A large-scale comparison of such percentages allows researchers to shed light on a number of research questions, three of which will be discussed in the second part of this paper. First of all, the percentages allow for rough comparisons between dossiers, concluding that St Agnes' dossier was rewritten far less often than that of St Nicolas, and that something about the dossier of St Mennas made scribes unwilling to significantly alter a scriptum when they were copying it. However, the method becomes far more interesting when it is used in combination with more extensive coding, so that elements of genre, language and context can be drawn into the analysis.

## **2 Preliminary results**

In what follows, I will present a survey of 192 hagiographical dossiers that were written for Benedictine monasteries in the bishoprics of Thérouanne, Tournai, Cambrai/Arras and Liège between the tenth and the twelfth century. On average, the dossiers in this corpus were rewritten within a range of 44 to 70 percent. In other words: when a scribe was producing a new scriptum about a particular saint, there was a 44 to 70 percent chance that he was consciously rewriting some older text, creating a new 'family' within the saintly dossier. Conversely, there was a 30 to 56 percent chance that he would copy an old scriptum, without attempting to make significant changes to the text. These numbers provide a first answer to Cerquiglini's statement that medieval narrative production was 'variance' for the field of high medieval hagiography. If we define 'rewriting' as changes in chains of a least twenty consecutive words, at least 30 percent of all hagiographical scripta were not being rewritten. Of course, his statement still stands if we were to define 'variance' as smaller changes in the manuscripts that might or might not have been introduced consciously, for such alterations were ubiquitous.

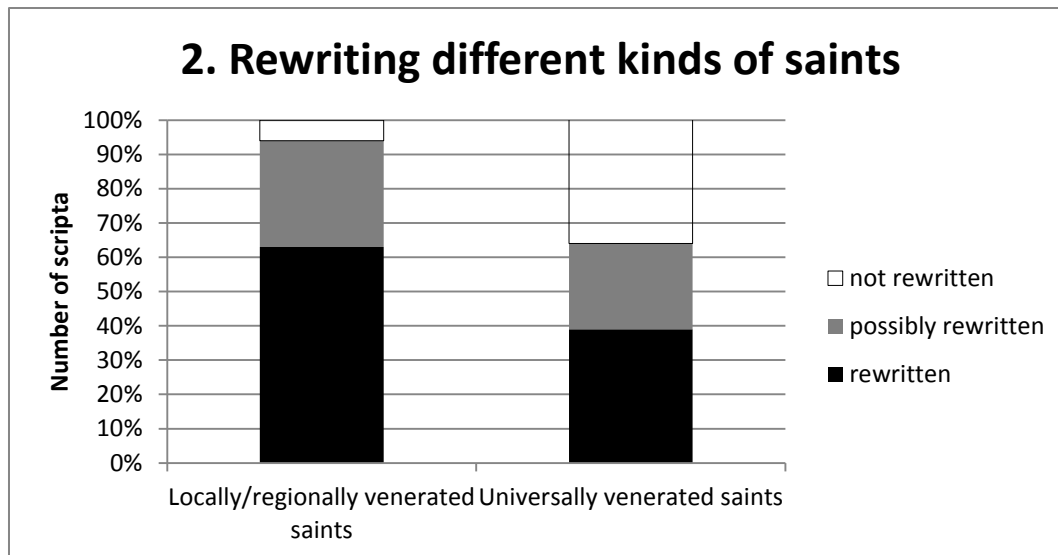
### **2.1 Saintly status and rewriting**

These figures can be broken down according to various parameters. First of all, there appears to be a difference between saints who were universally venerated, and those who were venerated locally or regionally within the bishoprics of Thérouanne, Tournai, Arras/Cambrai and Liège. Both kinds of saints were important to the monks in the Southern Low Countries, be it for different reasons. The universal saints, such as apostles Peter and Paul, desert father Antonius, Agnes of Rome or Caecilia were powerful saints who were honoured throughout Christianity, because they functioned simultaneously as role models, beacons of Christian identity, and universal intercessors with God. Their lives have been preserved in dossiers with an average of 7.94 scripta. The local and regional saints were important for very different reasons. Patron saints, such as Bertinus (of St.-Bertin), Gislenus (of St.-Ghislain) and Winnocus (of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc) protected their own monastic communities and often befriended other regional saints. Figures such as Autbertus, the bishop of Arras/Cambrai, not only protected their own Episcopal cities from enemies but also potentially provided a beacon of regional identity for the people in their episcopates. The lives of such saints have been preserved in dossiers with an average of 7.55 scripta. Judging from the number of scripta per saint, we would have to conclude that local/regional saints were about as popular as universal saints. The difference is negligible.

However, there are differences in the level of rewriting between the two kinds of saints. The dossiers of universal saints were rewritten within a range of 39 to 64 percent. This figure is relatively low when compared to this area's local and regional saints, whose dossiers were rewritten within a range of 63 to 94 percent (see graph 2). In other words, a scribe who was producing a new scriptum about one of these local saints was relatively likely to significantly rewrite the existing story.

*Graph 2: rewriting different kinds of saints. In this graph, the black bar represents the texts that were certainly rewritten (63% and 39%). The grey area represents the texts that may or may not have been rewritten, and for which further research is necessary (31% and 25%). The white area represents the amount of texts that were certainly not rewritten (6% and 36%)*





The explanation for this difference should be sought in a saint's amount of involvement in a monastic community. A saint such as St. Peter was venerated almost everywhere, and even a small monastery such as St.-Ghislain possessed one of his Passions and celebrated his feast day.<sup>32</sup> However, they were never incited to rewrite his Passion so that St Peter's connection to their monastery would be shown in a slightly different light, as everyone knew full well that St.-Peter had died long before the monastery of St.-Ghislain had even been conceived of and that the community of St.-Ghislain did not possess an extraordinarily powerful relic of this saint. Of course, there could be multiple other motives to rewrite the text, from stylistic to spiritual; but there was seldom an urgent cause to change the story of a saint who had lived and died in distant lands. Local saints, on the contrary, often had a very direct involvement with a specific monastic community. He or she may have founded the monastery, may have been buried there, or have donated grounds to the monks. As a result, the lives of such saints often needed to be rewritten because of changing demands and practical concerns – for example, when some lord was casting a greedy eye on some of the monastery's properties, the story of how the saint donated this particular possession to the community could be brought into sharp focus in order to discourage the lord in question.<sup>33</sup> The high level of rewriting in these texts shows that they had to be updated quite often to remain useful to their audience.

## 2.2 Genre and rewriting

A second finding is that the amount of rewriting in a dossier depended on the genre of the scripta involved. While Vitae and Passiones were relatively unlikely to be rewritten, texts that dealt with the

<sup>32</sup> Brussels, KBR, II 975 f. 68r.

<sup>33</sup> Deploige, 'Écriture, continuation, réécriture', p. 40.

remains and/or deeds of a saint after his or her death (the *Miracula*, *Translationes*, *Inventiones* and *Revelationes*) were rewritten almost as frequently as the dossiers of local saints.

As we have seen, *Miracula* were rarely rewritten in the strictly literary sense. Research of Jeroen Deploige into rewriting processes in the Southern Low Countries reveals that between 900 and 1240, only 15 percent of all Miracles were rewritten.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, it was quite common to modify existing Miracle collections by adding new stories, deleting obsolete ones or rearranging the collection as a whole. Such rewriting/rearranging of Miracle collections happened in 62 to 93 percent of cases, which made it almost as frequent as the rewriting of local saints. The amount of rewriting of *Translationes*, *Inventiones*, *Revelationes* and similar genres is equally high: between 64 and 90 percent.

The explanation for these high percentages of rewriting might be similar to the reason that so many lives of locally/regionally venerated saints were rewritten. As far as can be judged from the sparse sources, monastic communities that possessed the relic of a saint would also be interested in owning one or more scripta about that saint's relic, usually in the shape of a miracle collection or a *Translatio*.<sup>35</sup> Such scripta contextualized the relic and increased its practical relevance for the monastic community, as they explained how the saint's body had come to be found, or what kind of miracles the relic was known to perform. In order to be most effective, the scriptum about a relic had to emphasise the saint's worth to a particular community, mention people and places that would be known to the scriptum's audience, and update the scriptum with new miracles in order to remain relevant to the ever-changing public. Once again, the reason for these high rewriting percentages is probably that these genres usually had a very direct and almost 'political' relevance for the monasteries that possessed them.

However, it should be taken into account that these figures are based on relatively small numbers. A sum total of 68 dossiers with miracles have been preserved. Most of them contain too few scripta to be studied here – 28 of them contain just one scriptum, 18 contain two scripta, and 12 contain three scripta. There remain only ten dossiers that contain four to twelve scripta. As a result, the abovementioned quantification is based on ten dossiers with a total of 77 scripta.<sup>36</sup> The same

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<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> *Annales de l'abbaye de Saint-Ghislain* (Monuments pour servir à l'histoire des provinces de Namur, de Hainaut et de Luxembourg: Troisième division. Annales et Chroniques), ed. by P. Baudry (Brussels: M. Hayez, 1848), pp. 327-29.

<sup>36</sup> *Leonardus conf. Nobiliacensis in dioec. Lemovicensi* (4 scripta), *Servatius ep. Tungrensis* (4 scripta), *Salvius ep. et Superius mm. Prope Valencenas* (5 scripta), *Stephanus diac. protomartyr* (6 scripta), *Benedictus ab. Casinensis* (7 scripta), *Hilarius ep. Pictavensis* (9 scripta), *Iesus Christus D.N.* (9 scripta), *Silvester papa* (10 scripta), *Andreas apost.* (11 scripta), *Nicolaus ep. Myrensis* (12 scripta).

goes for the rewriting percentages of Translationes, Inventiones, Revelationes etc., as these numbers are based on a corpus of 14 dossiers with 111 scripta.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.3 Rewriting within the monastic walls

Last but not least, this method of quantification may be able to shed some light on rewriting practices within a monastery. As a rule, monasteries would possess just one scriptum about every saint – one scriptum about Adalbertus, one scriptum about Antonius, one scriptum about Caecilia, and so on. However, exceptions were frequent. One of the most extreme cases is the monastery of St.-Vaast, from which 72 hagiographical dossiers have been preserved. Of these dossiers, 52 contain only one scriptum, but the other twenty dossiers contain two scripta. Fourteen of those twenty contain two ‘rewritten’ scripta, that is, two scripta from two different families. Five dossiers contain two texts that both belong to the same family. In one final dossier, there are too many missing folios to determine whether it has been rewritten:

- 52 dossiers with one scriptum
- 14 dossiers with two scripta from two families (‘rewritten’)
- 5 dossiers with two scripta from the same family (‘copied’, ‘textual reproduction’)
- 1 heavily damaged dossier with two scripta

This means that the monks of St.-Vaast copied or acquired five (or maybe six) scripta that they already possessed. The amount of textual reproduction in St.-Vaast was thus five to six out of twenty scripta, or 25 to 30 percent. In other words, when the monastery of St.-Vaast produced or acquired a second scriptum about a particular saint, there was a 25 to 30 percent chance that the new scriptum would be more or less identical to the old one, and a 70 to 75 percent chance that the new scriptum would be of a new family.

Comparing these figures to those from other monasteries in the region in the table below, it immediately strikes the eye that several monasteries have left rather more than 72 hagiographical dossiers. The monastery of St.-Laurent in Liège, for example, possessed dossiers of 338 saints, Marchiennes had dossiers about 224 saints and St.-Sépulcre about 132 saints. The monastery of St.-Vaast was either not particularly interested in hagiography, or its hagiographical manuscripts have suffered relatively heavy losses.

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<sup>37</sup> *Bartholomaeus apost.* (4 scripta), *Dionysius ep. Parisiensis*, *Rusticus et Eleutherius mm.* (4 scripta), *Servatius ep. Tungrensis* (4 scripta), *Iohannes Baptista, praecursor Domini* (5 scripta), *Salvius ep. et Superius mm. prope Valencenas* (5 scripta), *Severinus ep. Coloniensis* (5 scripta), *Hucbertus ep. Leodiensis* (6 scripta), *Maria Magdalena paenitens* (8 scripta), *Quintinus m. Viromandensis* (8 scripta), *Cucufas m. Barcinone* (9 scripta), *Gervasius et Protasius mm. Mediolani* (9 scripta), *Nicolaus ep. Myrensis* (9 scripta), *Stephanus diac. protomartyr* (17 scripta), *Iesus Christus D.N.* (18 scripta).

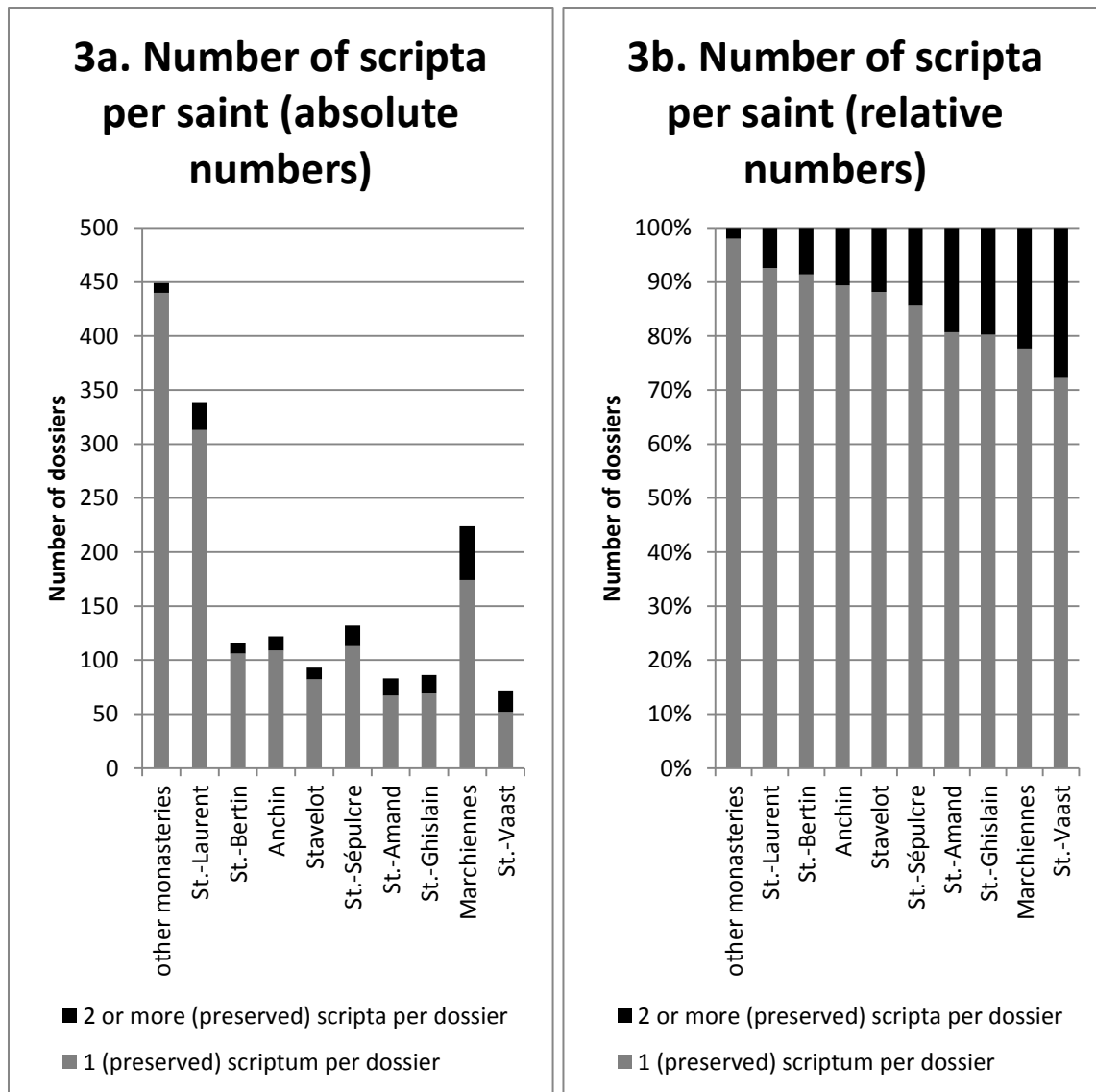
Secondly, it is obvious that most dossiers contained no more than one scriptum. On average, 85 percent of all dossiers contain one scriptum, whereas the remaining 15 percent contain two or more scripta.<sup>38</sup> Again, the exact balance varied between monasteries. In St.-Laurent only 7.4 percent of dossiers contained more than one scriptum, whereas this rose to 22.3 percent in Marchiennes and 27.8 percent in St.-Vaast (these numbers are represented by the black areas in the graphs below).<sup>39</sup> St.-Laurent was apparently eager to have an extensive hagiographical library about as many saints as possible, whereas the communities of St.-Vaast and Marchiennes saw the value of collecting multiple texts about a single saint. These numbers thus show different strategies of hagiographic library management during the high Middle Ages.

*Graph 3: the number of preserved scripta per saint, subdivided by monastic library*

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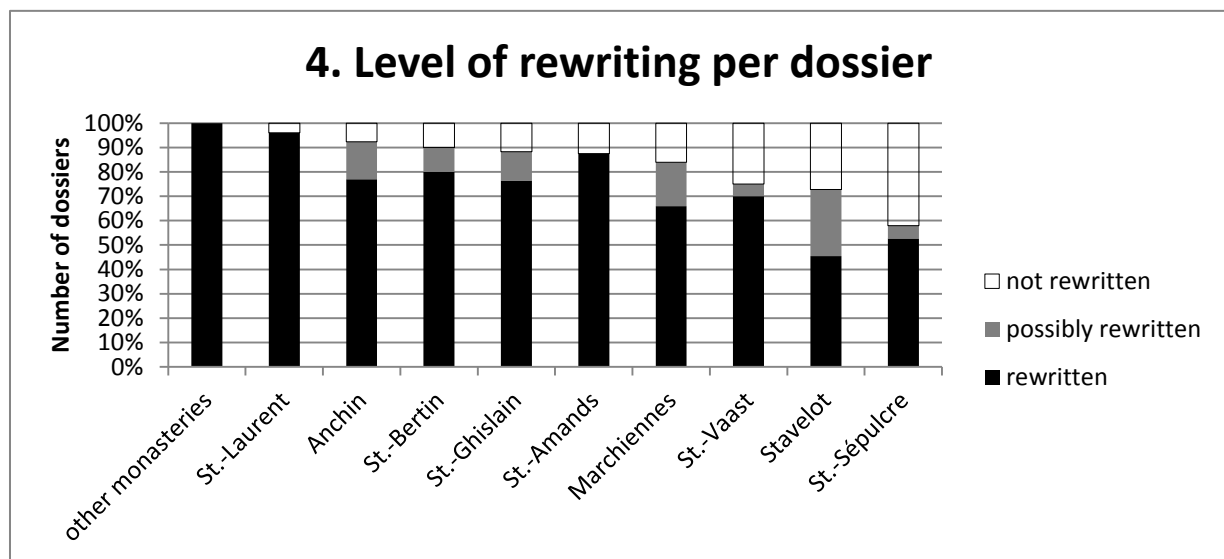
<sup>38</sup> From these monasteries 1,085 dossiers of one scriptum have been preserved, against 181 dossiers with two or more scripta – a proportion of 5.99:1.

<sup>39</sup> The percentage of preserved dossiers that contain two or more scripta, is 7.4 percent in St.-Laurent, 8.6 percent in St.-Bertin, 10.7 percent in Anchin, 11.8 percent in Stavelot, 14.4 percent in St.-Sépulcre, 19.3 percent in St.-Amand, 19.8 percent in St.-Ghislain, 22.3 percent in Marchiennes and 27.8 percent in St.-Vaast. As it is unclear how many scripta were lost over the centuries, these numbers do entail some uncertainty, for it cannot be excluded that 'double' scripta about a saint might have been destroyed more frequently than the 'unique' scripta in a monastic library.



Graph 4 below shows how much *rewriting* was done within the dossiers that consisted of more than one scriptum. Again taking the monastery of St.-Vaast as an example, we saw that it possessed twenty dossiers that contained more than one scriptum, of which fourteen to fifteen dossiers contained two scripta of different families ('rewritten' scripta): a rewriting level of 70 to 75 percent. In graph 4, it is easy to see that the percentage of rewriting could vary significantly between monasteries. In St.-Sépulcre in Cambrai only 43 to 47 percent of the dossiers were rewritten, whereas the number rose to 96 percent in St.-Laurent in Liège. This means that if a monk from St.-Laurent started to write a new hagiographical scriptum, there was only a 7.4 percent chance that he would be writing about a saint about whom the community already possessed a scriptum. If he did produce a second text about that saint, there was a 96 percent chance that his copy would belong to a different family. In other words, the community of St.-Laurent was uniquely determined to keep 'doubles' from entering their monastic library.

Graph 4: the level of rewriting in a dossier (per monastery)



Monasteries like St.-Laurent, Anchin and St.-Bertin rarely owned two relatively similar copies of the same scriptum. If these monasteries did possess two scripta about one saint, the scripta usually belonged to different families. The monastery of St.-Sépulcre on the other hand owned a relatively large number of largely identical scripta. This might have been caused by a conscious policy to copy existing scripta, leading to a larger amount of doppelgangers in the monastic library. On the other hand, the monks of St.-Sépulcre may also have expanded their libraries by buying new codices or receiving codices as a gift, instead of producing manuscripts themselves. This would not be unusual. Abbot Wibald of Stavelot-Malmedy, for example, profiled himself as a Maecenas who bought works of art from famous talents, instead of greatly expanding the monastic scriptorium.<sup>40</sup> As the manuscripts in the monastic library of Stavelot are made up in quite varying styles, it has been speculated that a large number of them must have been bought.<sup>41</sup> If St.-Sépulcre had adopted a similar strategy, it would have been inevitable for new acquisitions to sometimes contain scripta that the monastery already possessed a copy of.

Rewriting a hagiographical text occurred predominantly within the context of a monastic library. For example, a scribe from monastery A might travel to monastery B to copy a certain scriptum held in

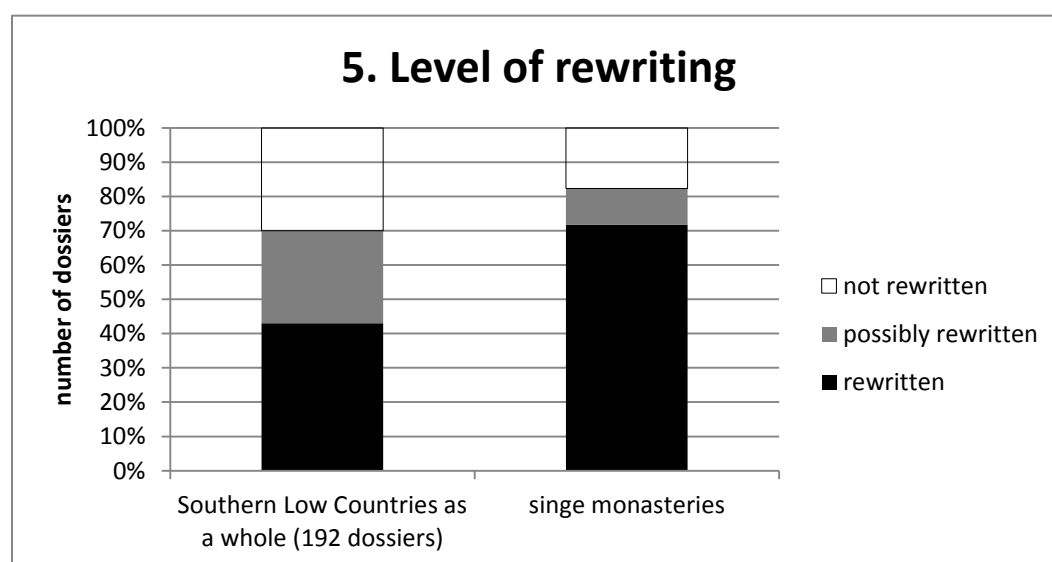
<sup>40</sup> M.-R. Lapière, *La lettre ornée dans les manuscrits mosans d'origine bénédictine (XI<sup>e</sup> - XII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Bibliothèque de la faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège, 229) (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1981), p. 247. This presents a sharp contrast with the situation in monasteries like St.-Bertin and St.-Amand, where the important abbots strongly supported the monastic scriptorium and sometimes participated in the production of manuscripts (H. Platelle, *Le temporel de l'abbaye de saint-Amand des origines à 1340* (Bibliothèque Elzévirienne, nouvelle série: Études et documents) (Paris: Librairie d'Argences, 1962), p. 128; A. Boutemy, 'Un grand enlumineur du X<sup>e</sup> siècle: L'abbé Odbert de Saint-Bertin', *Annales de la Fédération archéologique et historique de Belgique* 32 (1947), pp. 247-54).

<sup>41</sup> Lapière, *La lettre ornée*; K. Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (York: York Medieval Press, 2005), pp. 44-47.

their scriptorium. Scribe A would not usually rewrite that scriptum in the process of copying it. On the other hand, as soon as monastery A possessed its own copy of the scriptum, they would not normally want to make yet another copy of that very same text – but they would on occasion rewrite the story, for example to update its contents in accordance with some urgent need. In other words, scribes tended to *copy* scripta from other monasteries, and to *rewrite* scripta that their monastery's library already possessed a copy of.

To express this quantitatively, we can take the average level of rewriting in the 192 preserved dossiers from the bishoprics of Thérouanne, Tournai, Arras/Cambrai and Liège, and compare this to the average level of rewriting within various monasteries (the average from the monastery of St.-Vaast, plus that of St.-Laurent, St.-Sépulcre, Marchiennes, etc.) Graph 5 below shows that the average level of rewriting in the Southern Low Countries as a whole was 43 to 70 percent, much lower than the 72 to 83 percent level of rewriting per monastery.

Graph 5: rewriting within the entire corpus, compared to rewriting within single monastic libraries



Say monastery A possesses the *Vita falso adscripta Goldschero mon.* of Eucharis, Valerius and Maternus (BHL 2655) and acquires another scriptum about these saints. There is only a 17 to 28 percent chance that the new scriptum will be another copy of BHL 2655, and a 72 to 83 percent chance that the new text will be of a different family – either because it is an entirely different text, or because the scribe changed at least a chain of twenty consecutive words when he copied BHL 2655. Communities were usually not interested in acquiring a duplicate copy of a hagiographical scriptum. However, say that neighbouring community B does not possess any text about saints Eucharis, Valerius and Maternus, and is interested in acquiring one. There is a 30 to 57 percent chance that a scribe from monastery B will simply copy an existing text about Eucharis, Valerius and

Maternus without rewriting it. This is perfectly logical, as monastery B probably just wants to gain possession of a text about these saints, without feeling the need to rewrite the text. As a result, a scribe who is producing the first scriptum about a saint for his community is about twice as likely to simply copy an existing text than a scribe who is producing a second scriptum about that saint for his community.

For a more tangible example of this phenomenon, we can delve into the extant scripta about saint Andreas. Fourteen scripta have been preserved that contain his passion (BHL 428) and/or the miracles he performed (BHL 430). These fourteen scripta can be subdivided into ten different families. Expressed quantitatively, Andreas' dossier has been rewritten 69 percent. However, when we divide these figures over the various monasteries, we see that no monastery possessed two scripta of the same family. In other words, the rewriting percentage per monastery is always 100 percent.

*Table 6: extant scripta with the deeds of Andreas (BHL 428 and/or 430)*

<b>Monastery</b>	<b># scripta per monastery</b>	<b># families per monastery<sup>42</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of rewriting per monastery</b>
St.-Vaast	1 scriptum	1 family ('C')	n/a
Gembloux	1 scriptum	1 family ('F')	n/a
Anchin	1 scriptum	1 family ('H')	n/a
Stavelot	1 scriptum	1 family ('J')	n/a
Marchiennes	2 scripta	2 families ('C' and 'A')	100%
St.-Ghislain	2 scripta	2 families ('C' and 'B')	100%
St.-Amand	2 scripta	2 families ('C' and 'F')	100%
St.-Sépulcre	2 scripta	2 families ('D' and 'E')	100%
St.-Laurent	2 scripta	2 families ('G' and 'I')	100%
<b>9 monasteries</b>	<b>14 scripta</b>	<b>10 families</b>	<b>Per monastery: 100%</b> <b>Entire corpus: 69%</b>

<sup>42</sup> Family (A) is BHL 428, (B) is BHL 428, without 'Tunc beatus...' but with the fragment starting with 'Egeas ut arreptur...', (C) is BHL 428, without 'Tunc beatus...' and with 'Egeas ut arreptur...' as well as BHL 430, (D) is BHL 428, without 'ubi angelorum...' and 'Tunc beatus...' but with 'Egeas ut arreptur', (E) is BHL 428, without 'Ubi angelorum...', 'Tunc beatus...', and with 'Egeas ut arreptur' and BHL 430 without chapters 2-3, 5, 8-11, 13-22, 25-38, (F) is BHL 428 and 430 without further changes, (G) is a heavily rewritten version of BHL 428, with BHL 430 in which the order of the miracles was changed (H) is BHL 428, and 430 without the praefatio, (I) is a shortened version of BHL 428 as well as 430, (J) is BHL 430.



It is revealing that family 'C' is present in St.-Vaast as well as in Marchiennes, St.-Ghislain and St.-Amand. Family 'C' is a version of BHL 428, minus a fragment that starts with the words 'Tunc beatus...' but with an extra fragment added ('Egeas ut arreptur...') and followed immediately by BHL 430. The four monasteries that possessed this text could not have come up with these changes independently. Instead, they copied the scriptum from one another without rewriting it, but did not make (or otherwise acquire) another unchanged copy of that scriptum, once they possessed it. In other words, textual reproduction is always most frequent between monasteries, whereas it is unusual within the monastic walls. From this, we can conclude that textual rewriting was not something that happened self-evidently during the process of copying a scriptum, but that monks could choose to make a copy of a scriptum in some cases, and rewrite the scriptum in other circumstances.

### 3 Conclusion

A quantitative approach to questions of rewriting entails several practical and methodological issues. As a result, few have attempted to study rewriting quantitatively, even though it can add significantly to our understanding of *variance* in medieval manuscripts. This article has focused on some of the methodological issues in the attempt to make a quantitative study of a large number of scripta.

One of the main problems is practical in nature. Library catalogues are not detailed enough for this kind of research, yet it is unfeasible to manually study a corpus of more than thousand scripta in great detail. This article, for instance, concerned itself with approximately 1,500 scripta; and these were only the high medieval hagiographical scripta that were written for the benefit of Benedictine monasteries in the bishoprics of Arras/Cambrai, Thérouanne, Tournai and Liège. Larger territories, such as the Holy Roman Empire, would amount to a corpus of thousands upon thousands of scripta.

This article has discussed two compromises between purely catalogue-based and purely manuscript-based research. The first, obviously unworkable solution was to count the number of words that differed from one scriptum to another. The second was to concentrate on word chains. For this article, only rewritten chains of at least twenty subsequent words have been counted as evidence for a rewritten scriptum. This compromise has the advantage of being a quick and efficient way to scan for rewriting, while it largely circumvents the problem of intentionality. Obviously, the downsides to this approach are equally formidable. First of all, there is the inherent arbitrariness of a dividing line at twenty words. Secondly, the focus on word chains undervalues the small rewrites that can be of momentous importance to the meaning of the scriptum, such as a change in the place where a saint was born or buried. At the same time, the focus on chains tends to overrate stylistic rewrites that changed how a story was told, but did not really change the story itself. Nevertheless, I

would argue that the focus on word chains is a useful way to survey the material and see where the most interesting cases of rewriting might be found. Only in combination with a qualitative study will a chain-based approach really start to show its merits.

Applying this approach to the corpus of hagiographical scripta, we found that these were rewritten from 43 to 70 percent. This number means that when a high medieval scribe sat down to write a hagiographical text, there was a 30 to 57 percent likelihood that he would copy an existing scripta, and a 43 to 70 percent likelihood that he would make at least one significant change to the text.

Three factors influenced this percentage. First of all, the status of a saint and the genre of the scriptum proved quite important. Scripta about universally venerated saints such as Petrus, Antonius or Agnes were only rewritten 39 to 64 percent, somewhat below average. On the other hand, scripta that dealt with saints of local or regional importance were rewritten quite frequently (60 to 93 percent, calculated from a corpus of 213 scripta) as they were most likely to require modifications to keep them relevant to changing circumstances in the monastery. The same goes for Miracles (62 to 93 percent, calculated from a corpus of 79 scripta), and scripta concerning relics such as *Translationes* and *Inventiones* (64 to 90 percent, calculated from a corpus of 111 scripta).

Secondly, a monastery that did not yet possess a scriptum about a particular saint was most likely to copy a scriptum from another monastic library without significantly changing it. Once a community possessed a scriptum about a saint and had been using it for a while, the monks became more likely to rewrite it. In other words, rewriting took place mostly within the monastic walls, whereas copying a scriptum occurred more often between monasteries.

Thirdly, we have seen that monasteries such as St.-Sépulcre, Stavelot-Malmedy and St.-Vaast possessed a remarkable number of 'doubles' in their monastic library: two largely identical copies of a text. This might be due to several factors. It could be that these monasteries saw a value in possessing two copies of the same scriptum that others did not see. For example, they might copy a saint's life into a manuscript that was used during office, and made another copy in a manuscript that was used in the refectory or some other context of use; whereas other monasteries would just use the one manuscript in different contexts. Another explanation might be that these monasteries acquired a relatively large amount of manuscripts through gifts, exchanges or sales instead of producing them themselves. This would have made it more difficult to prevent the accumulation of 'double' scripta in their libraries.

Finally, we can conclude that a quantitative approach can offer more insight into Cerquiglini's famous dictum. For the corpus of high medieval hagiography in the Southern Low Countries, it appears that 30 to 57 percent of all scripta feature no changes of at least twenty subsequent words. This could be

construed as an argument against the notion that medieval literature as a whole was ‘variance’, especially because the findings indicated that scribes distinguished between copying a scriptum and rewriting a scriptum – at least on the level of word chains. They did not automatically rewrite each and every scriptum they copied, but only did so in very specific circumstances. Together, these observations from a quantitative survey constitute a frame of reference for further research into the high medieval hagiography from the Southern Low Countries.

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